

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JAKART 05584 290523Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 5584

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: VIETNAMESE REFUGEES

REF: (A) SINGAPORE 1585; (B) STATE 099194; (C) SINGAPORE 2027

1. CONSULAR OFFICER INVITED TO DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
APRIL 22 TO DISCUSS VIETNAMESE REFUGEE SITUATION IN
INDONESIA. ACCORDING TO LATEST GOI COUNT THERE ARE 115
VIETNAM REFUGEES NOW IN INDONESIA, ALL (OR NEARLY ALL) ON
RIAU ISLANDS. TOTAL OF 394 VIETNAM REFUGEES ENTERED INDONESIA,
AND 279 HAVE BEEN PROCESSED LEAVING REMAINDER OF 115.
THESE REFUGEES COSTING LOCAL AUTHORITIES ABOUT 3.5 MILLION
RUPIAHS (ROUGHLY U.S. \$8,500) MONTHLY FOR FOOD CLOTHING
AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES, A HEAVY BURDEN FOR LOCAL RESOURCES.
DFA OFFICIAL CLAIMED UN NOT HELPING AND HE ASKED WHETHER
USG COULD HELP. NOT ALL REFUGEES HAVE BEEN SCREENED AND
HE SAID GOI PLANNING TO DO SO. HE ASKED FOR EMBASSY HELP
IN THIS AND WAS TOLD EMBASSY HAD NO MANPOWER IT COULD
SPARE FOR SUCH PROJECT.

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PAGE 02 JAKART 05584 290523Z

2. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (UNDP) OFFICIAL WHO HANDLES REFUGEE MATTERS WAS ALSO INVITED TO DFA ON APRIL 21 FOR SIMILAR DISCUSSION. THIS IS EVIDENCE THAT AT LAST GOI IS SERIOUSLY CONCENTRATING ON REFUGEE PROBLEM. UNDP OFFICER TOLD DFA IT IS PREPARED TO GIVE ASSISTANCE OF U.S. \$2 PER DAY PER PERSON FOR THREE MONTHS, PLUS SOME INTERNAL TRAVEL COSTS, WHEN GOI REQUESTS IT. GOI HAS NOT DONE SO YET BUT IS HOLDING MEETING ABOUT VIETNAM REFUGEES APRIL 30 AND MAY MAKE SUCH REQUEST THEN. UNDP OFFICIAL ALSO TOLD DFA UNHCR WANTS TO SEND TWO OFFICIALS TO INDONESIA TO SCREEN REFUGEES, AND IF GOI AGREES THESE TWO COULD ARRIVE IN TWO WEEKS. APRIL 30 MEETING MAY ALSO APPROVE THIS PROPOSAL.

3. IN MID-MARCH EMBASSY ESTIMATED THERE WERE ABOUT 48 VIETNAM AND CAMBOIDIAN REFUGEES IN INDONESIA. UNDP FIGURE WAS ABOUT THE SAME. THIS FIGURE PLUS 80 MENTIONED IN REF A GIVES TOTAL OF MORE THAN 115 ALTHOUGH POSSIBLY SOME OF 80 COULD HAVE MOVED ON ELSEWHERE.

4. REF B ASKS WHETHER 80 REFUGEES AT TANDJUN PINANG, RIAU ISLANDS ARE VIETNAMESE REFUGEES AND WHAT UNHCR IS DOING FOR THEM. GOI HAS NEVER REFERRED TO A GROUP OF THIS SIZE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH EITHER EMBASSY OR UNDP. ONLY GROUP MENTIONED BY SIZE IS LATEST BATCH OF 34 WHO ARRIVED RIAU ISLANDS JAN 29 THIS YEAR. IF THERE IS SUCH A GROUP GOI HAS NOT YET ASKED FOR ASSISTANCE.

5. REGARDING SUGGESTION PARA 4 REF C, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT IF GOI ACCEPTS TWO UNHCR OFFICIALS FROM GENEVA THIS WOULD BE BEST SOLUTION. IF SCREENING INDICATES THERE ARE REFUGEES WITH POTENTIAL FOR RESETTLEMENT IN U.S., THEN SINGAPORE'S SUGGESTION COULD BE CONSIDERED AS ONE POSSIBILITY FOR FURTHER PROCESSING OF REFUGEES. OTHERWISE WE FEEL TOO MUCH USG INVOLVEMENT BEFORE WE KNOW CIRCUMSTANCES OF REFUGEES MAY MISLEAD GOI INTO BELIEVING THERE IS USG COMMITMENT OF SOME KIND TO TAKE CARE OF REFUGEES EVEN BEFORE THEY ARE SCREENED.
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